

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 05437 080933Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 678

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5437

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM CARTER TO ZIA

REF: STATE 226222

1. PRESIDENT ZIA WAS MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE PRESIDENT'S WARM LETTER AND SHOWED NO VISIBLE SIGN OF DISAPPOINTMENT AT NOT BEING INVITED TO THE WHITE HOUSE THIS FALL. SINCE ZIA WAS LEAVING FOR NORTH KOREA ON THE EARLY MORNING OF SEPT. 8, I HAD TOLD HIS OFFICE I COULD EITHER SEND AROUND THE LETTER IMMEDIATELY OR DELIVER IT PERSONALLY THAT DAY, THE 7TH. THE PRESIDENT INVITED ME TO CALL AT 8PM AT HIS RESIDENCE IN THE CANTONMENT, WHERE HE MET ME WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMSUL HUQ. ZIA READ AND RE-READ THE LETTER WITH GREAT CARE AT THE BEGINNING OF MY CALL AND FROM HIS REACTION IT WAS APPARENT THAT HE ALREADY KNEW HE COULD NOT BE INVITED TO WASHINGTON. HE IMMEDIATELY SMILED AND SAID IT WAS A GOOD LETTER AND LISTENED TO ME DESCRIBE IN GREATER DETAIL THE HEAVY BURDENS WHICH PREVENTED PRESIDENT CARTER FROM RECEIVING HIM DURING A VISIT TO THE UN. ZIA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND, ALTHOUGH I KNOW HE IS GREATLY DISAPPOINTED, I BELIEVE HE DOES ACCEPT THE VALIDITY OF THE REASONS. AS THE ATMOSPHERE WAS AN EASY ONE, I ASKED THE PRESIDENT IF HE HAD TIME TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS AND THERE ENSUED AN HOUR-LONG CONVERSATION, PARTS OF WHICH I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY. AT THE END OF OUR TALK, ZIA AGAIN REFERRED
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 DACCA 05437 080933Z

TO THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER; IT WAS A "BEAUTIFUL LETTER" HE SAID. IT WAS "WARM, SINCERE, CORDIAL, UNDERSTANDING..." AND HE CONTINUED TO ADD SIMILAR ADJECTIVES. HE ASKED PARTICULARLY THAT I CONVEY TO THE PRESIDENT HIS GREAT APPRECIATION FOR THE LETTER AND INFORM HIM THAT HE WOULD REPLY TO IT SOON.

2. I CONCLUDE THAT THE LETTER HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE

ADMIRABLY. THE PRESIDENT HAS CAUSED ZIA TO UNDERSTAND THAT
ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT CANNOT RECEIVE HIM IN WASHINGTON,
WE RECOGNIZE AND APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT HE IS
DOING IN BANGLADESH. I BELIEVE THIS ENCOURAGEMENT HAS
BEEN APPROPRIATE AS WE ARE ONE OF THE FACTORS WHICH IS
INFLUENCING ZIA TO PROCEED ALONG THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
DIRECTIONS HE HAS CHOSEN. THE LETTER SHOULD SERVE THIS
PURPOSE WELL UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR WHEN, IF EVENTS
CONTINUE TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY HERE, I HOPE THE ISSUANCE OF AN
INVITATION TO VISIT THE US MAY BECOME PRACTICABLE.
SCHNEIDER

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